

2 April 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Establishment of a Unified Communications System

1. The attached is a draft report prepared by GAO and the Office of Communications is preparing an Agency position. I do not believe OLC has any comments or suggestions to provide the Director of Communications in this respect and therefore recommend that we treat our receipt of it for information only.

2. It is recalled that Frank Slatinshek, House Armed Services Committee staff, was particularly interested in the Agency's communications system and its tie-in with the Defense Communications System. The draft report does not specifically mention the CIA's communication network, nor its tie-in with other communications networks. Further, the draft report is restricted as to use as noted on the report cover and is intended for the Congress. Therefore, it would seem that OLC should not take any initiative in informing Frank Slatinshek of our receipt of the draft report or of our position with respect to it. However, we may be questioned by our Hill clients on it, eventually.

3. Of interest is that the principal recommendation in the report is based upon earlier recommendations of the House Committee on Government Operations to remove the policy direction of the National Communications System from the Office of Emergency Preparedness and establish it in a separate entity at the highest level of the Executive Branch. This would increase the stature of the policy role, perhaps making policy formation more susceptible to congressional direction, etc. The report also recommends relieving the Secretary of Defense of his present role as Executive agent and manager of the National Communications System and transferring this operational/management role to the new entity, thus increasing the power of the new entity and removing the conflict of interest facing the Secretary of Defense as prime user of the National Communications System and as Executive agent for other Government agencies.

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